

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 INR-05 CIAE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00

INRE-00 SSO-00 L-01 SP-02 PM-03 DODE-00 EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3348

C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 1412

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PINS PFOR PINT GV US

SUBJECT: RETURN OF TU-95'S TO GUINEA

REF: (A) STATE 188096, (B) CONAKRY 1413

1. SUMMARY: SEKOU TOURE BLAMED REAPPEARANCE OF TU-95'S IN CONAKRY ON "AN ERROR" AND RENEWED HIS ASSURANCES ABOUT U.S.-GUINEAN UNDERSTANDING. END SUMMARY.

2. CHARGE MET WITH PRESIDENT TOURE AT 1800 ON AUGUST 10 AT PALACE. CHARGE DELIVERED ORIGINAL COPY OF LETTER TO TOURE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER AND MADE POINTS REFTEL, PARAS ONE AND TWO.

3. TOURE CALLED TU-95 LANDINGS "AN ERROR" WHICH HE HAD TAKEN STEPS TO CORRECT AND WOULD NOT BE REPEATED. TOURE SAID THAT MOROU BALDE, SECRETARY GENERAL, MFA, HAD APPROVED A SOVIET REQUEST ON SATURDAY AUGUST 6 FOR SHORT TRANSIT-REFUELING STOP BY TWO TU-95'S EN ROUTE TO LUANDA WITHOUT INFORMING TOURE, IN SPITE OF GOG'S DECISION TO STOP ALL TU-95 LANDINGS. TOURE SAID HE HAD SUSPENDED BALDE
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FROM DUTIES; HE WAS INCLINED TO ABSOLVE FONMIN CISSOKO AND OTHER MINISTERS PERIPHERALLY IMPLICATED IN ERROR.

4. TOURE SHOWED CHARGE YELLOWED COPY OF THREE-PAGE INSTRUCTION DATED FEBRUARY 12, 1972 SIGNED BY SAIFOULAYE DIALLO, THEN MINISTER OF STATE FOR DOMAIN OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. DOCUMENT GRANTED SOVIETS RIGHT

TO TWO LANDINGS PER MONTH BY TU-95'S AND OTHER APPARENTLY MILITARY AIRCRAFT, AND ITEMIZED PROCEDURES FOR THEIR CLEARANCE, HANDLING, MAINTENANCE, AND SUPPLY BY SOVIETS. TOURE SAID DOCUMENT HAD BEEN PUT INTO FORCE AT HEIGHT OF STRUGGLE AGAINST "FIFTH COLUMN" IN GUINEA WHEN GOG FELT PARTICULARLY INSECURE. TOURE CLAIMED HE HIMSELF HAD NOT RECALLED OR BEEN AWARE OF DOCUMENT. THIS IS WHY IN 1976 HE HAD CONTINUALLY REBUFFED AMBASSADOR HARROP BY MAINTAINING, AT LEAST INITIALLY, THAT TU-95'S AND OTHER SOVIET FLIGHTS WERE ALLOWED ONLY TO SUPPORT ANGOLA'S LIBERATION STRUGGLE. BALDE CITED DOCUMENT IN DEFENDING HIMSELF FOR ALLOWING LATEST TU-95 TRANSIT LANDING. TOURE EMPHASIZED THAT HE HAD CANCELLED THIS INSTRUCTION ONCE AND FOR ALL.

5. TOURE THEN PRODUCED VOLUMINOUS HECTOGRAPHED "TRANSCRIPT" OF JULY 4 COUNCIL OF MINISTERS SESSION ON PRIMIN BEAVOGUI'S TRIP TO U.S. (SAME DOCUMENT BEAVOGUI SHOWED TO CHARGE ON JULY 30). HE FLIPPED TO PAGE NEAR END AND INSISTED CHARGE READ SEVERAL PAGES, PART OF WHAT APPEARED TO BE LONG MONOLOGUE BY TOURE FOLLOWING BEAVOGUI'S REPORT. IN IT TOURE ADMITS TO GOG THAT HE HAD BEEN MISLED AND HENCE HAD "LIED" TO AMERICANS IN CLAIMING GUINEA ONLY ALLOWED SOVIET FLIGHTS AS AID TO AFRICAN LIBERATION, DISCLAIMS KNOWLEDGE OF DIALLO'S 1972 ACCORD WITH USSR, AND JUSTIFIES HIMSELF FOR
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REVERSING FIELD AND MANDATING A "FLEXIBLE AND ACCOMODATING" APPROACH TO U.S. BY VEAVOGUI; TRANSCRIPT ALSO LAUDS "POSITIVE" OUTCOME OF VISIT.

6. TOURE REITERATED TO CHARGE THAT AS SOON AS HE HAD LEARNED OF TU-95 LANDINGS, HE HAD ORDERED SOVIETS TO GET THEIR ONE REMAINING (DAMAGED) TU-95 OUT OF GUINEA IN 24 HOURS. HE EXTENDED THIS TO FOUR DAYS WHEN SOVIETS COULD NOT REPAIR IT, TO KEEP PRESSURE ON. TOURE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT HE WILL REPLY TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER VERY SOON. HE ADDED THAT HE DID NOT WISH TO JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS BUT IT SEEMED LATEST INCIDENT MAY NOT HAVE OCCURRED SPONTANEOUSLY; THERE MAY HAVE BEEN A "PLOT" TO SPOIL U.S.-GUINEAN RELATIONS, AND THAT GUINEA HAD TO REMAIN EVER VIGILANT IN THIS RESPECT. CHARGE AGREED THAT VIGILANCE WAS NEEDED AND THAT PRESENT CONJUNCTURE MUST BE SIEZED TO REINFORCE AND EXPAND EXCELLENT U.S.- GUINEAN ENTENTE CREATED BY BEAVOGUI VISIT.

7. COMMENT: IT MAY BE TOO MUCH TO ASK WASHINGTON CONNAISSEURS OF CONAKRY'S TU-95 SAGA DURING PAST 14

MONTHS TO BELIEVE TOURE HAS ALL ALONG BEEN UNAWARE OF BASIC
GOG DIRECTIVE GOVERNING TU-95 OPERATIONS. BUT TOURE HAS TRIED
TO DISSOCIATE HIMSELF FROM THAT DIRECTIVE
BEFORE HIS MINISTERS, (ACCORDING TO TRANSCRIPT), CLAIMS TO HAVE
FOUND SCAPEGOAT FOR LATEST LANDING (BALDE AND PERHAPS EVENTUALLY
CISSOKO OR EVEN DIALLO), AND HAS REAFFIRMED DIRECTLY TO CHARGE
THAT BEAVOGU'S PROMISES TO US IN JUNE REMAIN VALID. (MORE
DETAILED AND PARALLEL ACCOUNT OF INCIDENT FROM
USUALLY RELIABLE MIDDLE-LEVEL GOG SOURCE IS REPORTED
CONAKRY 1413.) AT LEAST IN THIS CONVERSATION, TOURE'S SUSPICIONS
ABOUT "PLOTS" SEEM TO BE --FOR ONCE -- TURNING TOWARD SOVIETS.
TOURE DID NOT RPT NOT RAISE PENDING PL-480 REQUEST OR "COAST
GUARD CUTTERS". HOWEVER, INCIDENT POINTED UP POSSIBLE
GREY AREA IN U.S.-GUINEAN UNDERSTANDING -- TU-95 TRANSIT AND
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REFUELING STOPS AS CONTRASTED WITH ACTUAL DEPLOYMENTS -- WHICH
SOVIETS MAY HAVE THOUGHT WORTH EXPLOITING.
MAINLAND

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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